

# THE LITTLE BOOK OF OCCASIONS



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# INTRODUCTION

There are many different occasions that might require planning, from impromptu parties to birthdays to big annual events. Whatever the event, it's a chance to bring your friends, family and loved ones together under one roof to create lasting memories.

This is why we've created the Little Book of Occasions, a handy little guide for organising all kinds of festivities.

You'll find all the steps necessary for planning an event –

1. [The Event Planning Checklist](#) – The basics you need to get sorted such as the time and date, budget, venue, and guest list.
2. [The Budget Planner](#) – A more detailed look at the budget that lets you work out exactly how far it will stretch.
3. [The Occasions](#) – Ideas for themes, suggestions for food and drink, and thoughts about entertainment to help you put together the perfect event.
4. [Tips for a Successful Occasion](#) – Last minute considerations to make sure the evening goes as smoothly as possible.

So flick through the pages and find all you need to throw a super shindig and celebrate your favourite occasions!

# THE EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Before you get carried away with your event, go through this checklist to make sure you have everything planned.



## DATE & TIME

The date and time you set for the get-together should be the starting point – once you know when the event is taking place, you can start drawing up a budget plan that suits the amount of time you have to organise.



## BUDGET

Setting a clear budget can give you some idea of what you'll be able to afford. When you've decided on this, it'll be easier to decide on a guest list as well as things like the venue, food, drink, and entertainment. We've included a budget template on the next page to get you started, but feel free to improvise!



## LOCATION

Knowing what you can afford will give you a better idea of where to hold the event. You might decide on a destination that requires some travelling or somewhere close by and easy to get to, but either way it can help to whittle down the choices before thinking about specific venues.



## VENUE

Size is key when it comes to choosing a venue – a small get-together might only require a house or small restaurant, while grander occasions could call for a hotel or public hall. When this is confirmed, then you can start planning the scale of the event – keep the venue choice in mind when you plan your theme, as some places may not want too many decorations.



## GUEST LIST

Is this an event for close friends and family, or is it a big bash for the whole neighbourhood? The budget you've decided on can have quite an influence on your guest list, therefore it might be better to calculate what cost-per-head you can manage before writing down any names.



# THE BUDGET PLANNER

Events can cost a pretty penny, therefore planning a budget can be a good way to keep the expenditures under control while still having everything you want on the night!

EXPENSE	BUDGET PER HEAD	TOTAL BUDGET	SPENT PER HEAD	TOTAL SPENT
Venue				
Photography				
Decorations				
Equipment				
Entertainment				
Invitations				
Food and Drink				
Others				
Grand Total				

# Birthday Parties



Whether you're turning six or sixty, birthdays are always an occasion to celebrate. Nothing gives you that special feeling more than waking up to a brand new year of your life, which gives you a pretty good reason for throwing a get-together!

## KIDS

Birthdays are often one of the biggest days of the year for young children, and a well-planned party can make the day extra special!



### THEMES:

Favourite Movie, Book, or TV Show  
Favourite Sport or Team  
Favourite Place  
(e.g. Beach, Zoo, Outer Space)

### MENU:

Finger Food  
Sandwiches  
Snacks  
Sweets and Chocolates  
Fizzy Drinks  
Birthday Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Character Impersonators, Magicians, and Other Entertainers  
Stalls for Face-Painting or Temporary Tattoos  
Bouncy Castle



## TEENS

Even the moodiest teenagers love a good shindig – their desire for independence might give you less of a say in the overall picture, but there are a few ideas you can throw forward that might just get past quality control.



### THEMES:

Decade Party (e.g. Decade they were born in)  
Movies, Books, or TV Shows  
Hollywood Red Carpet

### MENU:

Barbecue  
Snacks  
Fizzy Drinks  
Birthday Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Dancing Competition  
Karaoke Singing  
Truth or Dare, Twister, Heads Up  
Video Game Competition



# Birthday Parties



## ADULTS

With adulthood comes responsibility, sacrifice, but more importantly, freedom! Throwing a birthday party as an adult gives you more versatility in your approach – depending on your budget and guest-list, there are plenty of exciting options to go for.



### THEMES:

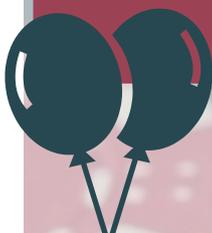
Decade Party  
Casino Night  
Masquerade Ball

### MENU:

Finger Food  
Snacks  
Canapes  
Wine, Beer and Spirits  
Birthday Cake  
A Three Course Meal for a  
Dinner Party

### ENTERTAINMENT:

A Poker Tournament  
A Murder Mystery Dinner  
Dancing  
Fireworks



## GOLDEN OLDIES

While the energy you have for singing and dancing might not quite be the same as it used to be, celebrating a birthday in your later years can still bring you that special feeling – especially when you're surrounded by friends and family.



### THEMES:

Teenage Years  
Milestone Party  
This Is Your Life

### MENU:

Buffet  
Tea Party Food  
Their Favourite Dish  
Drinks  
Birthday Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Trivia Games  
Dancing Competition  
Bingo  
Talent Show  
Puzzles

# Celebrations

## ANNIVERSARIES

Every anniversary is significant – whether it's the first or the fiftieth, it's always nice to celebrate your time together. You might feel that the occasion calls for a romantic night in, but sometimes it's fun to share the joy with everyone!

### THEMES:

- Milestone Party
- Decade You Got Married
- Famous Couples Party
- Vow Renewal
- Hawaiian Luau

### MENU:

- The Couple's Favourite Dishes
- Finger Food
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- How Well Do Guests Know the Couple?
- How Well Do the Couple Know Each Other?
- Name That Tune, The Year Was, and Other Nostalgic Games

## WEDDINGS AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

The day you and your partner say your vows is special, therefore the celebration that follows should be just as momentous, and the best way to commemorate your union in style is to throw a reception your guests will remember for years to come!

### THEMES:

- Colour themes e.g. Black and White Ball
- Couple's Favourite Movie, Book, or TV Show
- Casino Night

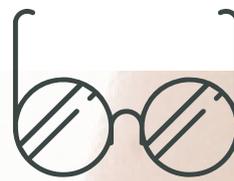
### MENU:

- The Couple's Favourite Dish
- Seafood Buffet
- Sit-Down Meal
- Cocktail Bar
- Wedding Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Magician
- DJ/Live Band
- Dancing
- Caricature Artist
- Party Games for the Children

# Celebrations



## RETIREMENT

Retirement is normally a significant milestone in someone's life – whether it's a career or a way of life, calling time on something can be emotional. Celebrating the occasion can make for a great opportunity to look back as well as forward, and a retirement party can be the perfect way to send someone off.

### THEMES:

Work or Career Related  
Retiree's Passion or Hobby  
Decade They Started Working

### MENU:

Finger Food  
Snacks  
The Retiree's Favourite Food  
The Retiree's Favourite Work  
Lunch

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Roast the Retiree  
A Slideshow or Highlight Reel  
Stories and Anecdotes



## WELCOME TO THE WORLD PARTY

Bringing a baby into the world is a memorable time for everyone involved, and a Welcome to the World party can be just the way to introduce the new addition to the rest of the family and friends!

### THEMES:

Blue vs Pink  
Green for Neutral  
Elephants,  
Doves,  
and Rabbits  
Prince or Princess

### MENU:

Finger Food  
Snacks  
Drinks  
Cake

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Make a Wish for the Baby  
Sign or Build A Baby Book  
Bury a Time Capsule for  
When They Grow Up  
Party Games for the Children



# Celebrations



## STAG PARTY

Giving the groom one more night of festivity before the wedding day is a longstanding tradition – it could be a quiet night in or a messy night out, but either way it's an occasion to celebrate and remember.

### THEMES:

- The Stag's Interests or Hobbies
- Tribute to The Stag's Childhood or Teenage Years
- Casino Night

### MENU:

- The Stag's Favourite Dish
- Back Garden Barbecue
- Hot Wings Challenge
- Trendy Restaurant Drinks

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Drinking or Eating Games
- Truth or Dare, Stag Challenges, & Other Party Games
- Outdoor Activities (e.g. Rafting, Climbing, Abseiling)
- Clubbing



## HEN PARTY

A night of female bonding could be the perfect way to offset the bride's nerves before the big day, so get the girls together and give her a great night out to mark the huge occasion.

### THEMES:

- The Hen's Interests or Hobbies
- Tribute to The Hen's Childhood or Teenage Years
- Bridal Boot Camp

### MENU:

- The Hen's Favourite Dish
- Wine & Cheese
- Tea Party
- Wine Tasting

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Drinking or Eating Games
- Dress the Bride, Banned Word and Other Party Games
- Spa Day/Pampering Day
- Clubbing

# Celebrations



## PROM

Gone are the days of dining hall discos and formal dances, here comes a transatlantic classic in the shape of the school prom. From tuxedos and tiaras to limos and lip-gloss, there's no better or fancier way to end the year!

### THEMES:

- Black Tie
- Masquerade Ball
- Decade Party
- Geographical Theme
- Hollywood Red Carpet

### MENU:

- Finger Food
- Canapes
- Theme Related Food
- Drinks
- Punch Bowl

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Band or DJ
- Yearbook Signing
- A Themed Photo Booth



## GRADUATION

A graduation marks the end of your education and the start of adulthood, and what better way to celebrate your success and look forward to the future than a big bash with your friends, family, and fellow graduates?

### THEMES:

- Life Story Theme
- Future Career
- Travel Theme

### MENU:

- The Graduate's Favourite Dish
- Reinvented 'Uni Dinners'
- Graduation Cap-Cakes and Other Graduation Themed Food

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Photo Booth
- Yearbook Signing (If there are lots of graduates together)
- Beer Tasting/Beer Keg

# REUNIONS

Whether it's bringing old friends or family together, reunions are generally pretty special occasions. Marking the time with an unforgettable party can let you catch up on old memories and create new ones to go alongside them, making sure it won't be a long wait until the next one!



## FAMILY

Getting the whole clan under one roof can be stressful, especially if you have a large extended family to consider, but once you're all together the fun can begin!

### THEMES:

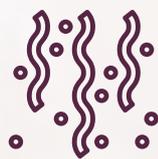
Family Traditions  
Cultural Traditions

### MENU:

Pot Luck  
The Family's Favourite Dishes  
Family Members' Famous Dishes  
Barbecue

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Board Games for Kids  
Karaoke  
Card Games  
Charades or Pictionary  
Photo Slide Show  
Home Movies



## CLASS

It might be with long forgotten primary school friends or your old university buddies, but class reunions often make for an evening of telling funny stories, reliving embarrassing memories, and catching up with old pals!

### THEMES:

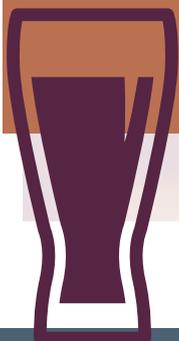
The Good Old Days  
Back to School  
Decade Theme - When You Started or Finished School

### MENU:

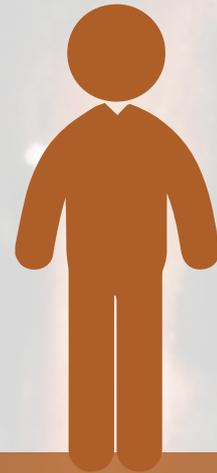
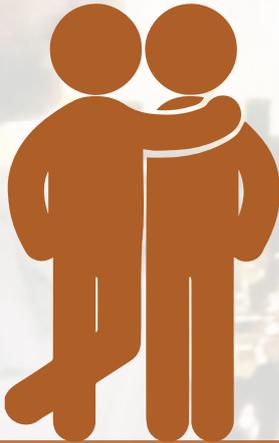
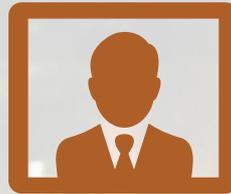
Finger Food  
Snacks  
Your Old School Lunch Menu  
Drinks

### ENTERTAINMENT:

A Quiz about your School Years  
Compare Old and New Photos  
Guess the Impression  
Recreate an Old School Photo



# WAKES



## WAKE

Losing a loved one is always difficult, but a wake can provide the opportunity to remember and celebrate the deceased's life alongside their closest friends and family.

### THEMES:

Funeral Flowers  
Photos of the Deceased  
A Tribute to their Life and  
Memory

### MENU:

Snacks  
Finger Food  
Wine, Beer and Spirits

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Showcase Some Memories of  
the Deceased's Life  
A Memory Board or Book for  
People to Add Recollections  
Deceased's Favourite Songs  
or Genre of Music

# ANNUAL EVENTS

## HALLOWEEN

Planning a Halloween party can be both fun and challenging due to the sheer wealth of options out there, but whether you're going for ghastly ghouls or fun-filled fantasy it's always exciting to be involved!

BOO!

### THEMES:

Particular Horror Movie, TV Show, Book, or Character  
Horror Movies, TV Shows, or Books in general  
Historical Theme (e.g. Victorian London)  
Geographical Location

### MENU:

Food Shaped Like Body Parts, Creepy Crawlies, or other scaring things.  
Finger Food  
Sweets and Cakes  
Gory Cocktails

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Dancing Competition  
Fancy Dress Competition  
Bobbing for Apples and Other Party Games  
Horror Movie Marathon

## VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day doesn't always have to belong to couples – if you fancy getting the whole family involved, or if you want just want to rebel against the whole idea, a Valentine's (or anti-Valentine's) Day party might be for you

### THEMES:

Family-Friendly  
Anti-Valentine/Singles

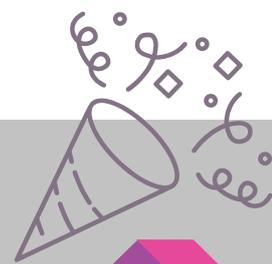
### MENU:

Wine  
Chocolate  
Snacks  
Heart & Flower Shaped Food

### DESSERTS

Entertainment:  
Dancing  
Party Games  
Arts and Crafts  
Romantic Movie Marathon

# Annual Events



## NEW YEAR'S EVE

Throwing a New Year's Eve party can be the perfect way to let loose after a long and exhausting holiday season. Blow up some balloons, play some tunes, and party 'til the sun comes up – just don't forget to watch the clock at midnight!

### THEMES:

- Masquerade Ball
- Casino Night
- New Year's Resolution (last chance to indulge)
- Black and White Ball
- Hollywood Red Carpet

### MENU:

- Finger Food
- Snacks
- Drinks

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Drinking Games
- Card Games
- New Year's Countdown
- Fireworks

## BONFIRE NIGHT

Guy Fawkes night is a time when people all over the country come together to celebrate – partly to light up the night sky with fireworks, but also to share food, bonfires and great times.

### THEMES:

- Outer Space
- Spooky
- Old School

### MENU:

- Jacket Potatoes
- Hot Dogs
- Chili
- Smores
- Baked Apples
- Hot Chocolate

### ENTERTAINMENT:

- Fireworks
- Bonfire
- Building a Guy
- Apple Bobbing

# Annual Events



## MOTHER'S DAY

Make sure your mum knows how much you love her with a shindig for her special day! Dedicate the occasion to her and everything she loves so she can celebrate with (and be spoiled by) her friends and family.



### THEMES:

Something Your Mother Loves  
Hobbies  
Famous Mothers  
This Is Your Life

### MENU:

Mother's Favourite Dish  
Breakfast in Bed  
Cake  
Sunday Roast  
Barbecue

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Mother's Day Awards  
Karaoke  
Charades  
Knitting Class  
Go Karting



## FATHER'S DAY

Amidst the years of wise words, back garden barbecues, and terrible jokes comes a day to celebrate all that is Dad – let him know what he means to you by throwing him his perfect Father's Day party!



### THEMES:

Something Your Father Loves  
Hobbies  
Famous Fathers  
Decade They Were Born

### MENU:

Father's Favourite Food  
Breakfast in Bed  
Cake  
Sunday Roast  
Barbecue

### ENTERTAINMENT:

Father's Day Awards  
Beer Tasting  
Arts and Crafts  
Pictionary  
Dancing Competition

# Annual Events

## CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Even the most devout amongst you will have reasons to celebrate sometime during the year – whether it's for Christmas or Diwali, bring your community together and rejoice in the name of fun!



### BAR/BAT MITZVAH

**Theme:** Coming of Age.

**Menu:** Traditional Jewish food – hummus, falafel, challah, knishes, and matzo ball soup.

**Entertainment:** Music and dancing, party games, arts & crafts.



### CHINESE NEW YEAR

**Theme:** Red and lanterns

**Menu:** Oranges, Carp Fish Noodles Chinese & Finger Food

**Entertainment:** The Dragon or Lion Dance Fireworks Mahjong



### EASTER

**Theme:** Eggs and Bunnies!

**Menu:** Finger food, snacks, egg or bunny-shaped food.

**Entertainment:** Face painting, egg decorating, egg and spoon or bunny hop races, and an Easter egg hunt.

### HANUKKAH

**Theme:** A Matzo Ball or Festival of Lights.

**Menu:** Latkes, sufganiyot, matzo balls, challah, beef brisket, and fried food.

**Entertainment:** Music and dancing, dreidel games, and lighting the menorah.

### CHRISTMAS

**Theme:** Winter Wonderland or Santa's Grotto.

**Menu:** Snack versions of Christmas Dinner and finger food.

**Entertainment:** Christmas music, dancing, and Secret Santa exchange.

### DIWALI

**Theme:** Festival of Light, Bollywood, or Casino Night.

**Menu:** Finger food, snacks, desserts, lassi, and mithai.

**Entertainment:** Music and dancing, fireworks, gambling, and musical games.

### EID

**Theme:** Muslim Country Theme or Moon and Stars of Islam.

**Menu:** Asian/Middle Eastern food – samosas, pakoras, a main rice dish.

**Entertainment:** Party games and arts & crafts.

# Just Because...

Sometimes the mood for a celebration can just hit you – it might not be a special occasion like a birthday or Christmas, it could just be because it's payday or an impromptu night out after work!



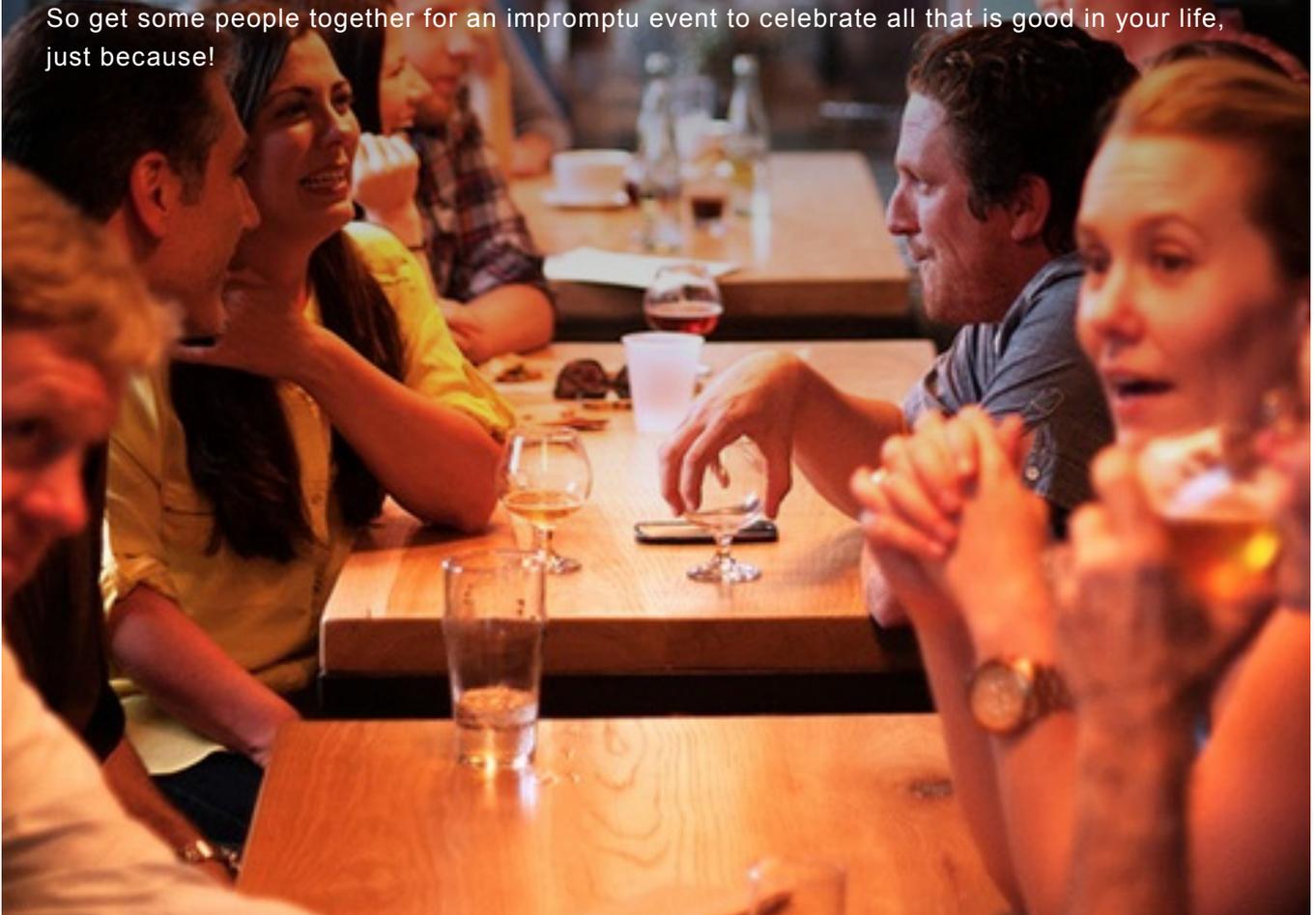
'Just Because' occasions happen because... well, just because! Did you spot a new outfit you want to debut in style? Find a new recipe that people simply have to try? Even if you just found a pretty cool playlist – celebrate and share the joy!



The great thing about these occasions is that there are basically no rules – you can pick the theme, the decorations, the dress code, the menu, the entertainment, and everything else you can think of.



You could throw a Las Vegas poker party with professional chips and high stakes, or a roaring '20s themed bash with tailcoats and flapper costumes. Serve up a platter of pastries and pies or tell your guests to bring a contribution and see who the best cook really is. Entertain your guests with a host of party games or simply pump the speakers up and get everybody moving. So get some people together for an impromptu event to celebrate all that is good in your life, just because!



## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OCCASION

Different types of event require different types of skill - you shouldn't have to worry about cocktail-making at a kids' birthday or handing out party favours at your best mate's stag do. However, we've compiled a few tips that we think should help get you through the majority of occasions with a little less stress.

### CLEAN AS YOU GO

While you definitely want to be able to relax and enjoy yourself, keeping an eye on mess and doing a little tidying up as the party goes on can make the final clean up job a lot easier. It can help to have a bucket or basin in the sink to put dirty dishes in so they aren't left lying around.

### TAKE LOTS OF PHOTOS

If you're throwing an epic party then photos should be a must – you'll be glad when you pull them out 20 years later and relive the fantastic memories you created on the night!

### UNLEASH YOUR SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

If you're the host of the party it's your job to keep the guests happy, so don't be afraid to move around and make sure everyone's having a good time, including yourself!

### PARTY FAVOURS

Party favours can be a nice touch at the end of a get-together, where everyone gets to take home a little reminder of the occasion and how great it was.

### ALCOHOL PRECAUTIONS

If you'll be serving alcohol at your party, it can help to take some precautions to make sure things don't fly out of control:

- Take people's car keys if they're driving.
- Make sure the toilet is clean and working properly.
- Keep space clear for people to sleep if they overdo it.

### OTHER BITS AND BOBS

Here are a few other things to keep in mind:

- Have somewhere to keep coats and shoes.
- Fill a bucket with ice for drinks.
- Have a steady supply of napkins, toilet paper, paper or plastic plates and cups, cutlery, & rubbish bags.
- Keep some bar garnishes handy.
- Make sure there's enough space in the fridge or freezer.

THE  
HOTEL  
COLLECTION

We hope our Little Book of Occasions has both helped and inspired you with practical tips and fresh ideas. If you're planning your own little occasion (or a big one...) we understand the time and work that goes into making it a success. We help people across the country plan their perfect event every day, whether it's a [wedding](#), conference or simply a short leisure break.

The Hotel Collection brings together unique hotels across the UK, from Aberdeen to Brighton, each with its own history and distinctive landscape. Our 130 function rooms are available for all kinds of occasions, alongside our AA rosette winning restaurants and health and leisure facilities.

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